



NOAA's National Ocean Service

ROUNDTABLES

LANDWARD PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

U.S. ports are vital transportation connectors that support ever increasing international trade, maritime traffic, and the huge vessels that navigate U.S. waters. To keep goods flowing safely and efficiently through coastal waters and through portside highways and railways, NOAA's National Ocean Service provides services and tools that facilitate environmentally sound port development.

Port and Coastal Area Planning

NOS works in partnership with state coastal zone management programs to prepare Coastal Zone Management Plans that address economic development that is compatible with the protection of natural resources. Currently, three state plans specifically address the needs of port areas, and NOS will assist 30 other states in improving their plans.

Redevelopment of Ports and Coastal Communities

Many ports have or are near coastal Brownfield sites where contamination prevents development and reuse. NOS leads a federal interagency effort called "Portfields" to integrate Brownfield properties in port redevelopment projects. Three pilot ports are currently participating in Portfields (Bellingham, WA, New Bedford, MA, and Tampa, FL), and NOS hopes to expand this service to as many as 20 more ports.

Port and Harbor Outreach

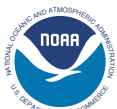
NOAA's Sea Grant Program is a well established partnership among academia, government, and industry. Research, outreach, and education components address coastal environmental, social, and economic issues, while a network of port and harbor specialists delivers information, technology, and techniques to ports and other coastal decision-makers to support environmental policy and enhance business opportunities. Because of their location on university campuses, Sea Grant specialists are uniquely positioned to foster NOAA's port-related research.

GIS Tools to Support Port Decisions

NOS currently provides Geographic Information System (GIS)-based planning and decision-support tools for four port areas. Providing environmental data in a geospatial framework improves the soundness and timeliness of environmental decision-making by allowing a more complete, consensus-based understanding of the issues and improving public involvement. NOS' goal is to provide these tools in as many as 25 ports.

Ballast Water and Invasive Species

Discharged ballast water from transoceanic ships is recognized as the leading unintentional pathway for introduced aquatic species. NOS is working on technologies and practices to help prevent the introduction and spread of nonindigenous species through ballast discharge. NOS is finding potential economic advantages in some of these options.



N O S

W o r k i n g f o r A m e r i c a ' s C o a s t s

**Port
Infrastructure
Permit Review
and Advice**

NOS (through NOAA) has a statutory mandate to advise federal agencies on actions that could harm endangered species, essential fish habitat, or protected marine mammals. This consultation process occurs throughout the country in virtually every port. For any action that requires a federal permit (e.g., dredging, shoreline modification, infrastructure development), NOS may make recommendations to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harm. NOS seeks to increase its capacity to review permits and to streamline the process. NOS and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service also consult on assessments and dredging of contaminated sediments in ports and harbors.

**Best Management
Practices to
Minimize
Environmental
Risks**

NOS is working with NOAA Fisheries and the ports of Oakland, CA, and Lake Charles, LA, to address specific concerns in port redevelopment. For example, NOS is currently partnering with the American Association of Port Authorities, the Coastal States Organization, and the port of Lake Charles to demonstrate the economic advantages of using clean dredged material from port areas in efforts to restore subsided wetlands. These and other best practices will minimize adverse effects on the coastal and marine environment.